

## Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 INT-05 /076 W

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R 221635Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SEKSTATE WASHDC 4069

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EGEN, UK

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO PRIME MINISTER'S ANTI-INFLATION

APPEAL

REF: LONDON 12972

1. CONSERVATIVE DEPUTY LEADER WILLIAM WHITELAW, SPEAKING FOR PARTY IN MRS. THATCHER'S ABSENCE, AUGUST 21 PLEDGED TORY SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM, AND ESPECIALLY 6 POUND PAY CEILING (REFTEL). WHITELAW, HOWEVER, ALSO URGED GOVERNMENT TO CUT PUBLIC SPENDING AND DELAY ITS NATIONALIZATION PLANS IN SPIRIT OF NATIONAL

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BELT-TIGHTENING.

2. WHITELAW'S FORTHRIGHT STATEMENT ON WAGE POLICY -- "WE SHALL STAND BY MR. WILSON IF HIS (WAGE) POLICY IS CHALLENGED, AND ENCOURAGE HIM AND HIS MINISTERS TO STAND FIRM" -- CONTRASTED SHARPLY WITH PARTISAN STATEMENT ISSUED BY LIBERAL CHIEF WHIP CYRIL SMITH. SMITH CALLED FOR WILSON "AND HIS CRONIES" TO RESIGN AND "LET NATION UNITE BEHIND NEW TEAM WHOSE ONLY POLICY IS THE CONQUERING OF INFLATION."

3. AUGUST 22 PRESS REPORTS THAT ALL SIGNS INDICATE RESULT OF MINERS UNION (NUM) BALLOT ON GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-INFLATION PACKAGE WILL SUPPORT 6 POUND WAGE LIMIT, THOUGH PERHAPS BY A RELATIVELY NARROW MARGIN. ALTHOUGH NUM POLL WILL CLOSE TODAY, OFFICIAL RESULTS WILL NOT BE KNOWN UNTIL NEXT WEEK.

4. COMMENT: WHITELAW STATEMENT PROVIDED STRONG BOOST FOR GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM. IT WILL NOT, HOWEVER, GO DOWN WELL WITH ALL ELEMENTS OF CONSERVATIVE PARTY, SOME OF WHOM WOULD HAVE PREFERRED A TOUGHER, MORE CRITICAL POSTURE. SMITH'S STATEMENT, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS UNNECESSARILY AND FOOLISHLY PARTISAN. IT BLATANTLY MISJUDGES PREVAILING POPULAR OPINION AND FAILS TO BUILD ON FACT THAT LIBERAL PARTY HAS ITSELF BEEN CALLING FOR A WAGE RESTRAINT PROGRAM EVER SINCE THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION. IN ANY EVENT, MOST WELCOME DEVELOPMENT OF ALL TO GOVERNMENT, IF IT MATERIALIZES, WILL BE A FAVORABLE VOTE BY MINERS, AS THIS WILL BOOST THE GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-INFLATION POLICY ON EVE OF TUC CONFERENCE. SINCE LEADERS OF NUM LEFT-WING FACTIONS HAVE BEEN URGING MINERS TO REJECT 6 POUND PAY LIMIT, AND THEREBY REPUDIATE EARLIER DECISION OF NUM EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, A FAVORABLE VOTE WILL ALSO PROVE HELPFUL TO NUM MODERATES.

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